

The Clipper Visits...John Stanton

By MARTHA HIMES

"I think retailing's mostly good taste and common sense," John Stanton said recently.

If anyone would know, he would. Stanton, 72, and his wife, Marcy, have owned The Studio since 1981. They bought the gift shop following decades of retail experience. "It's still a challenge after 24 years," he said.

The Johnstown, Pennsylvania native's first real job after college and a two-year Army stint was at Kaufman's Department Store in Pittsburgh, where he worked his way up to the position of buyer.

He then became a buyer with Filene's in order to be closer to his parents and sister, who had relocated to Massachusetts without him.

His family had visited Cape Cod since the early 1930s, when Stanton's father, a Presbyterian minister, filled in for vacationing clergy in Harwich. Soon, the family began spending entire summers on the Cape and eventually bought a house in East Dennis, where the elder Stantons lived after retirement.

Stanton's move to Filene's brought him an unexpected bonus: it introduced him to Marcy, who worked in the store's training and development department. The couple married in 1976, after both had moved on to different retail jobs, he to Health-Tex, she to Talbots.

Duxbury was the perfect location for their new home, situated between Talbots' Hingham headquarters and the Stanton family on the Cape.

"We decided that we loved the town and didn't want to get transferred. We knew if we had our own business we would stay here forever," he explained. They began shopping for a store, and as it happened, The Studio was being offered for sale.

They purchased it on October 1, 1981. "It was close to Christmas and we were buying a brand new business," he said. Luckily, they were buying from a very helpful seller, who assisted them in stocking the store for the coming holidays.



John Stanton and his wife, Marcy, have run The Studio for over 20 years.

lines of experience: Marcy handles staff training and scheduling and John oversees much of the buying and reordering.

One of retail's greatest challenges is developing and keeping good staff, and there Marcy's years of training and development experience have come in

ident of both the Rotary and the Duxbury Business Association, and has sat on the economic development committee and the community development committee. He is also active in the Pilgrim Church, and several years ago, helped to bring a Laotian refugee family to Duxbury.

Right now, his primary volunteer activity is with the Plymouth Philharmonic Orchestra. Stanton is the current president of the orchestra's board of directors, a position his wife previously held for two terms.

His interest in classical music goes back to his childhood, when his father was the president of the Johnstown Community Concert Association from 1935-1949.

"I was taken, kicking and screaming, to various concerts, and part of that rubbed off on me. I could have hated it, but I never did....On Sunday, after the big meal at lunchtime, there wasn't anything to do, so we spent a lot of time reading books and there were always classical records on the Victrola."

At December's Holiday Pops concert, Stanton had the exciting opportunity of conducting the orchestra for a few minutes, courtesy of his wife, who purchased the baton turn in a bidding war at a fundraising auction. He conducted two and a half minutes of "Parade of the Wooden Soldiers" after receiving some tips from Steven Karidoyanes, the orchestra's music director.

"The important thing is to bring them in all at the same time. When you give them a certain signal, they'll raise their instruments. On the downbeat, that's when they all start playing. So if you mess up, you'll have somebody starting at different times than the others," he said. "I was nervous. Fortunately, you're not facing the audience."

Much of his work for the PPO is fundraising. "You have to be very creative. It's a selling job," he said. "It's a challenge now because non-profits and specifically orchestras of any size in any city are hurting for support and funding."

While Stanton had never set foot in the store before buying it, he was aware of its excellent reputation. "It had a well-known name on the South Shore for quality giftware," he said. The Studio was first established in the mid-1930s, when the Turner family opened a gift shop in their Washington Street home as a waiting area for their portrait photography customers.

Just in case the store languished under their care, Stanton kept his job, then at Levi Strauss, for five more years while Marcy, The Studio's president, ran the shop. The Stantons now run the store together as partners, dividing its management along their own

handy. Stanton is quick to praise their excellent team.

"We have some very talented people who work for us... When we go on vacation we leave with a lot of confidence that things will be done the way we want them done," he said.

Five of their 28 employees have been with the store anywhere from five to 15 years, and share buying responsibilities with Stanton. "We could not do it all ourselves now. It would be impossible," he said.

Over the years the busy retailer has also filled a number of community roles. He has served as pres-

The PPO is interested in increasing its visibility in Duxbury, and hopes at some point to have a performance in the new Performing Arts Center. The orchestra would also like to get involved with the students on an educational basis.

Stanton still has plenty of family in the area. His two sons, now living in Woburn and West Townsend, have given him three grandchildren, two of them teens and one of them only nine months old. And Stanton's sister still lives in their parents' former home on the Cape.

Stanton and his wife have no plans for retiring yet. "It's hard work but we enjoy it," he said
